

Iron Mountain Communications Site Plan

Northern Region

Nez Perce National Forest

Selway Ranger District

Latitude:	45 degrees	58 minutes	00.9 seconds
Longitude:	115 degrees	32 minutes	39.5 seconds

Prepared by:

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Date: 8-27-93

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Date: 9-2-93

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Date: 9/3/93

I. INTRODUCTION

Forest Service and private communication uses currently exist at Iron Mountain. The site has proven to meet communication needs in the past. The Forest Service and the private sector wish to maintain and add to the current use as needed. The site has not officially been designated as a communication site and a communication site plan does not exist. Forest Service policy (FSH 2709.11) is to complete required documentation before approving additional use. This communications site plan is one of the documents required to meet Forest Service policy.

Iron Mountain first received use in the mid-late-1960s by Contel in the form of a microwave powered by propane. The Fenn Ranger Station constructed a building and installed equipment in the mid-1970s. The Red River Ranger Station began using the site in the early 1980s by tapping into Fenn's equipment. GTE, formerly Contel, now uses solar power with propane fuel for a power back-up. GTE has proposed to add additional solar panels. The Forest Service proposes to add another building and more equipment to meet its communication needs.

A. Location

The site is located on Iron Mountain in Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 7 East, Boise Meridian. Iron Mountain is located in the Selway Ranger District of the Nez Perce National Forest, about 12 miles south-southeast of Lowell, Idaho. Iron Mountain has an elevation of 6813 feet above sea level. Three maps of different scale and detail are attached as Exhibits A, B and C.

B. Access

Access to Iron Mtn. exists via open and maintained Forest Service roads. From Kooskia, ID travel on county road #1842 to Forest Road (FR) #286, following FR #286 to it's junction with FR #1129, at this junction proceed for approximately 2 miles to the junction with FR #1124. FR #1124 will junction and end at FR #464. At this point the traveler should turn left (east) onto FR #464 and proceed approximately 14 miles to the junction with FR # 464G. FR #464G will end at the Iron Mtn. site in 3 1/2 miles.

From Elk City, ID one can arrive at the Iron Mtn. site by traveling county road #1199 to it's junction with FR #471 (approximately 13 miles). FR #471 junctions with FR #464 after approximately 3 miles, FR #464 should be followed for about .75 mile to FR #464G. FR #464G will end at the Iron Mtn. site in 3 1/2 miles.

Summer access (July-Oct) can be accomplished with a two wheel drive, high clearance vehicle. Winter access (Nov-June) is usually restricted to foot or snowmobiles due to snow conditions.

C. Existing Communication Uses

Currently the Forest Service and GTE (formerly Contel of the West) have communications equipment and facilities on Iron Mtn. (see Exhibit C).

1. Forest Service

The Nez Perce National Forest currently has one (1) 8Lx10Wx8H foot cinder block building which houses a repeater and other radio communication equipment. The category of use as noted in FSH 2709.11 is 48.12d Mobile Radio:Internal Communications. Four solar panels attached to the roof of the building supply the power. An antenna, about thirty (30) feet tall is used and is supported by attachment to the side of the building.

2. GTE

GTE presently has a special use permit allowing communication uses on Iron Mtn. The category of use as noted in FSH 2709.11 is 48.12a Common Carrier Microwave Relay which GTE uses to serve the Elk City area. This special use permit allows use of a 50x50 foot plot in which two (2) buildings, a microwave tower, and solar panel are located (see Exhibit C). The buildings have 8x16 and 8x8 foot dimensions and are painted a tan hue. The microwave tower is approximately 8x8 feet and 20 feet tall. The solar panel is supported by three 8 inch diameter, 15 foot high poles and is about 20 feet wide.

GTE is responsible for all maintenance of their facilities.

No other private entities are currently permitted to use the Iron Mtn. site.

3. Coordination with FAA

The FAA will be contacted to see if they have any concerns that need to be addressed.

II. OBJECTIVES

The management and development of the Iron Mtn. communications site are consistent with the Forestwide goals and objectives stated on pages II-2 and II-7 of the Nez Perce Forest Plan and the Management Area direction stated on page III-7 and 8 for management area 2. The standards for MA 2 are included below.

Below are specific objectives for the Iron Mtn. communications site. Development guidelines to meet these objectives are discussed in the next section. In the following pages the word and various forms of the word "administrative" often appear. The Forest Service considers the Iron Mtn. communications site an administrative site because it is needed to carry out Forest Service duties.

1. Provide administrative sites and facilities that effectively and safely serve the public and accommodate the workforce. (Forestwide Goal)
2. Forest Service buildings and other administrative site improvements will be managed and maintained at levels necessary to ensure that they are adequate and safe to meet the Forest's needs. (Forestwide Objective)

Objectives 3-12 reflect the standards for MA 2.

3. Permit recreation activities that do not interfere with the administrative functions.
4. Address the archeological potential and historic value of Forest Service sites and land and record as appropriate.
5. Graze livestock where compatible with administrative functions.
6. Lands are classified as "unsuitable" for timber production; do not schedule timber harvest.
 - a. Remove timber for salvage, public safety, and administrative purposes.
7. Meet established fishery/water quality objectives for all prescription watershed as shown in Appendix A of the Forest Plan.

8. Recommend sites or portions of sites for mineral withdrawal where necessary to protect improvements. Mineral leases shall state "no surface occupancy." Currently the site is not under mineral lease or mining claim.

9. Construct roads to provide access to and within areas as necessary for administrative purposes, while meeting standards needed for the respective site.

10. Reconstruct trails and maintain for administrative access.

11. Construct improvements to meet facility support needs for Forest administration.

12. Control wildfires.

a. Planned ignitions, when within prescription, will be allowed to burn to enhance resource values.

In addition to the Forest Plan direction above for administrative sites and MA 2, the following objectives should also be considered.

13. Meet the established visual quality objective(s) for the site.

14. Protect the site uses from vandalism and other man caused and natural damage.

15. Coordinate maintenance of access road and site by the various users.

16. Minimize exposure of employees, users, and public to high levels of radio frequency radiation.

17. Maintain the integrity of the O'Hara Research Natural Area.

18. Prevent disturbances between communications uses. Currently, the existing uses are compatible.

III. DEVELOPMENT

Development of the Iron Mtn. site shall be confined to the area shown on the attached site plan map. This area is 5.5 acres in size and located in Section 2, T30N, R7~~W~~^E, Boise Meridian.

The following development direction should serve as guidance to achieve the objectives set above. Each number coincides with the objective number in the previous section.

1. The designation and associated site plan will assure that development and management of Iron Mtn. serve the public and Forest work force effectively, adequately, and safely.

2. See above

3. The road to Iron Mtn. has 4-5 dispersed camping sites. The top of Iron Mtn. (the communication site) does not have any established camping sites but it is not uncommon for this area to be used for such purposes. This dispersed use has not contributed to vandalism of the equipment currently at the Iron. Mtn. site and should be allowed to continue. If concerns arise over vandalism, measures would be taken to address the concerns.

4. The Iron Mtn. site should have an archeological survey completed as soon as possible, and no later than 1995 or before any additional uses are authorized. Until the complete survey is complete, any proposed ground disturbing activities will require a site specific survey and archeological clearance.

5. There are no grazing allotments in the Iron Mtn. area and thus grazing is not and will not be permitted.

6. The Forest Plan has designated Iron Mtn. as management area 12 with the emphasis of timber production. Iron Mtn. should be considered as MA 2 inclusion acres within this management area. MA 2 emphasizes the management of administrative sites and are considered "unsuitable" for timber production.

a. Iron Mtn., by nature, is unsuitable for timber production with few trees and alpine character. Salvage operations and removal of hazard trees are highly unlikely in the area immediately adjacent to the communication site. Trees may need to be removed for proper operation of communications equipment where line-of-site openings are required. In these cases as few trees as are necessary will be removed.

7. Iron Mtn. lies within the West Fork O'Hara watershed with the beneficial use identified as anadromous fish and has an associated habitat objective of 90% (Forest Plan Appendix A, page 3). All activities associated with the Iron Mtn. site will meet these objectives.

8. Schedule mineral withdrawal for 1993-1994.

9. Access to Iron Mtn. is by way of Forest Road #464G. This road is maintained by the Forest Service and provides adequate access to the site. No additional roads will be constructed.

10. Forest Road #464G beyond the communication site turns into a four wheel drive vehicle trail and eventually a foot trail. Measures should be taken to rehabilitate that portion of the road beyond the site to restrict vehicle access, reduce erosion, and increase safety.

11. Improvements or additions to the Iron Mtn. site will require separate NEPA documentation. Only improvements shown to be needed will be permitted when there is no other reasonable alternative. Improvements and additions will meet the objectives and development standards in this site plan.

12. Wildfire will be controlled. The communications site will be considered and protected when control measures are being formulated, and all reasonable attempts shall be made to protect the site and its facilities.

a. Planned ignitions will take into account the communications site and have contingency plans to protect the site should an escape occur.

13. The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) for Iron Mtn. is partial retention. With this VQO the following shall constrain development of the site:

a. Buildings shall be only as large to accommodate their intended use or no larger than 10Wx16Lx12H feet.

b. Buildings, antennas, and other equipment shall "blend" with the landscape.

Buildings shall be painted with light hued earth tones (tan). Cinder block buildings can be painted or remain the natural grey cinder color.

Antennas shall be no taller than 30 feet. Support towers shall be only large enough to support current and predicted antenna use and be self supporting vs guyed.

Solar panels shall be as visually unobtrusive as possible. All solar panel proposals must have the District Ranger's approval.

Electrical and other types of lines will be buried when feasible.

14. Although Iron Mtn. is open to the public via unrestricted Forest roads, only limited vandalism has occurred in the past. Buildings should be stout enough to prevent the casual visitor from gaining entry. Solar panels and antennas should be constructed in a manner which discourages unauthorized accessibility.

A common-ground system will be used for each facility and all metal should be connected to the grounding system through a low resistance conductor.

15. Forest Road #464G is, and will be, serviced and maintained by the Forest Service. However, from time to time individual holders may need to provide supplemental maintenance. All authorized buildings will be serviced and maintained by the respective holders unless other arrangements are established at the time of authorization for additional buildings. All authorized structures shall be maintained in a serviceable and neat manner.

16. Employees shall adhere to the Forest Service Handbook of Health and Safety when near the Iron Mtn. site. The policy of the Forest Service is to maintain and manage communications site that will serve the public's needs while minimizing the exposure of the employee, user, and public to high levels of radio frequency (non-ionizing) radiation.

17. The Iron Mtn. site is immediately adjacent to the O'Hara Research Natural Area. Uses permitted on Iron Mtn. shall not detract from the Research Natural Area.

18. Only allow new uses which will not interfere with existing uses. Existing uses have seniority over proposed uses. This likely eliminates the use of the site by high-power uses such as Television and FM Radio broadcast.

IV. PREDICTED FUTURE USE

A. Federal

1. US Forest Service

The Forest Service currently has one building within the Iron Mtn. site used for communications equipment storage. The number of channels that the Forest has to communicate with has been found to be inadequate especially during fire season with multiple ground, air, and dispatch personnel needing radio communications. The Forest will likely expand it's communications capabilities to include additional frequencies and repeaters.

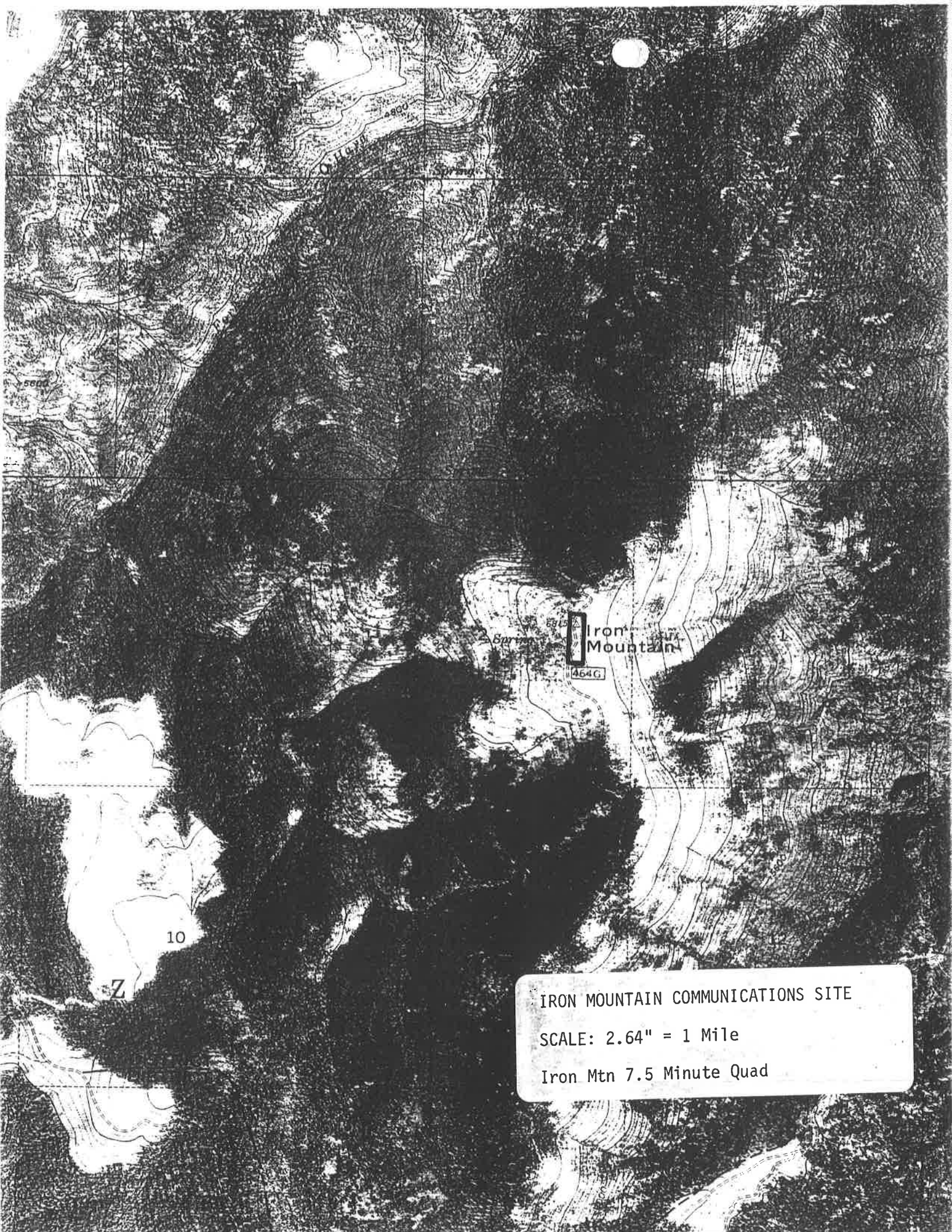
2. Bureau of Land Management

The local BLM office has expressed interest in housing communications equipment on Iron Mtn.. The type and size of this equipment could easily be consolidated within a Forest Service structure. BLM would need to be authorized for this use and cooperative maintenance agreements should be explored.

B. Non-Federal

1. GTE

The Forest has received a request from GTE to expand it's current permitted use area to 50x65 feet from 50x50 feet for the installation of an additional solar panel. This expansion, if approved, would improve phone service to the Elk City, ID area. GTE suspects that this expansion would suit their future needs well into the years 2000.



IRON MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATIONS SITE

SCALE: 2.64" = 1 Mile

Iron Mtn 7.5 Minute Quad

EXHIBIT C

Iron Mountain Communications Site

SITE BOUNDARY

ROAD 464G

EXISTING FS
RADIO BUILDING

EXISTING GTE
BUILDINGS

PROPOSED BUILDING
SITE

PROPOSED SOLAR
PANELS

SOLAR PANELS

O'HARA RNA BOUNDARY

SITE BOUNDARY

IRON MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATIONS SITE

SCALE: 44" = 1 Mile

5.5 Acres

6800

6760

6720

6680

6640

6600

